

COUNTY NEWS



PUBLISHED FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

March 2001

ERP Makes Summer Debut

There's a certain team of human resources, department personnel and payroll folks at the County who are really looking forward to summer. And it's not necessarily because of the inviting beach weather. Summer is when the County will begin using the human resources component of the County's Enterprise Resource Planning software (commonly known as "ERP").

ERP has been long talked-about, but because most of the action has been behind-the-scenes, few County employees outside the fields of human resources and finance have had the opportunity to see how it's going to impact their lives.

"We're changing the entire way things are done," said Willie Cook, who leads the County's ERP efforts on the Human Resources side. "We have fundamental rules and regulations that we have to abide by – those won't change. But the way a lot of things have been done at the County is obsolete, so we're implementing business process changes that will be much more beneficial to the end users."

The new software, Peoplesoft, will make it easier for staff with HR duties to get a new hire "in the system." Instead of chasing paperwork and making multiple phone calls to get someone set up in benefits, payroll, etc., automatic notifications will be sent out once the new hire's information is entered into the program.

When the implementation is complete (next year), all employees will be able to submit their timesheets electronically. They will have "self service" access to their benefits and payroll information.

"You'll not only be able to change some of your basic personnel data," explained Cook, "you'll be able to view a number of things such as your payroll, your benefits, rather than calling everybody."

Right now the team is in the final phase of testing to ensure things work as expected. Before implementation, all employees who work with human resources and fiscal systems will receive extensive, hands-on training.

"We're
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Willie Cook,
ERP project

Blood Donor Does it for Her Daughter



Laurie Pennington (left) will forever be grateful to the people who donated blood for her daughter, Leilani, (center) when she was an infant.

Driven by a pledge she had made just after her daughter's birth, Laurie Pennington of Human Resources signed up to help with the County's first employee blood drive 17 years ago.

Her daughter Leilani, now a healthy 22-year-old, was born with a rare condition in which everything she ate went through her lungs, instead of her stomach. Because she was going to need surgery, a call went out to donate blood. Pennington herself couldn't donate because she had just given birth. So she promised herself that when she could, she would give blood.

And she's been doing it ever since.

"It's a way to pay back all the people who came forward when she was in need," Pennington said.

Over a period of just eight days, the County is holding blood drives in 15 locations to provide convenient access to employees. The blood drive kicks off at the County Operations Center Annex on March 20 and ends at the East County Regional Center in El Cajon on March 30.

To find out how you can help, contact your building's blood drive coordinator or call Marissa O'Neil at (619) 409-3275.

Walk Event Becomes County Tradition

San Diego County is once again supporting the local WalkAmerica campaign on April 29 to raise money for March of Dimes and your support is needed. A County team of walkers is being recruited to help raise money to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality.

WalkAmerica is the oldest and most successful walking campaign in the nation, according to the March of Dimes.

Balboa Park and LEGOLAND are the two sites for this year's event. For more information contact your department March of Dimes coordinator or call Elise Lorentz at (619) 338-2053.

NewsBriefs

County Workers Go "Cuckoo" for Kids

A troupe of mental health professionals, many of whom work at Juvenile Hall, takes to the stage in a benefit performance of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" on March 31 and April 1 at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center (JCC). Proceeds partially benefit Polinsky Children's Center.

Tickets are just \$15 and are available at the JCC box office or by calling (858) 362-1348. A silent auction to raise money for the two children's programs is also scheduled for the Saturday, April 1, performance.

Carto Cranks Out Clicks

Public Works' Cartographic Services has a hidden treasure at its Kearny Mesa facility. It's a photographic laboratory available to all County department shutterbugs, and the rates are comparable to outside vendors. But before you send in those great snapshots of your winter vacation, just remember the lab is for work purposes only. For more information, contact Robert Laudy at (858) 694-3484.

Cyber Counsel

The County Counsel Legal Guide is updated and available on the County's Intranet site at "cww." To access the guide on the Intranet, click on "Departments," then "County Counsel."

Planning for Long-Term Care

Did you know that 40 percent of the 13 million Americans receiving long-term care are between the ages of 18 and 64?

Many people mistakenly believe their health-insurance covers it, but that's not necessarily the case. If you're interested in learning more about long-term care and the CalPERS LTC program available for County employees, go online to www.calpers.ca.gov/longtermcare or call toll-free (800) 266-1050. The next application period is April 1 through June 30.

Purple Little-People Pleaser

Parents, take note (or flight)! Barney and his buddies have a brand-new stage show and it's coming to San Diego April 4 - 8. DIBBS has done it again and come up with discount tickets to four showings. Check out the posted fliers or call DIBBS at (619) 235-7881.

Surfs' Up at Beach Watch

In the old days, you learned about most beach closures when you pulled into the parking lot. These days, you can log onto www.1800cleanup.org and get real-time information of beach water quality before you leave home.

Environmental Health's participation in this project made San Diego County the first local government in the nation to provide up-to-minute water quality information on the Web. The department's effort is in partnership with the Surfrider Foundation and Earth's 911. A bilingual, toll-free hotline also provides information by calling (800) CLEANUP.

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In *Walt's* Words...

Setting a Place at the Table

It's that time again! Negotiation time. That period every three years or so when County negotiators and labor representatives sit down together to craft a new labor agreement.

Frankly, it's not a process I particularly like. Emotions run high as each side, and even members within the same sides, attempt to address differing opinions on what is fair and reasonable. Oftentimes both sides dance around issues trying to test one another for the extreme boundaries believing that you must start at the extreme ends of the spectrum before striking fairness somewhere in between. This type of strategic gamesmanship often leads to misleading information and inflammatory rhetoric. Relationships become strained, expectations on all sides get way out of whack, mistrust sets in and our mutual mission and purpose can become blurred by ill will.

I wish I could wave a magic wand and guarantee these things won't occur. I wish the County could pay salaries and benefits that would make everyone happy. I wish the County could provide taxpayers with all of the services they want. And I wish all the name-calling and hard feelings could be avoided.

One thing I can guarantee is that the County will be fair and respectful in our dealings with labor and in our dealings with you. Yes, we will probably have to go through at least some of the dance. If things go true to form then both sides will spend considerable time making little progress attempting to convince the other of the wisdom in their proposals, while the other party responds by expressing outrage and righteous indignation. If these negotiations are similar to previous negotiations, then we'll go back and forth for a few months and then sometime in the spring or early summer we'll get together on an agreement.

This stuff is no fun...and I know it's hard on employees. Salary and benefit issues hit you where you live and naturally you want to know sooner rather than later where things will end up.

I'm hopeful things will be different this year. I'm optimistic that members of the negotiating teams will come to the table with respect for each other and with an understanding that early agreements benefit us all. Let's hope so. But however this process goes, I'd urge you to take the inevitable rhetoric with a grain of salt and recognize that we will get to a fair agreement. The Board of Supervisors and I are committed to it.

Walt Ekard
Chief Administrative Officer

The Supervisor's View

By Supervisor Ron Roberts



Part of an ongoing series by the Board of Supervisors.

You think your electric bill at home is appallingly high? Here at the County, our electric bill has shot up through the stratosphere, with a projected increase this fiscal year of nearly \$17 million.

This is money that could have been spent on a lot of other things, like providing more after-school programs for kids, delivering meals to home-bound seniors, or putting more deputies on the streets. Instead, we're left paying the price for one of the worst public policy decisions in state history — the deregulation of the utility industry by the state Legislature.

As a solution is being worked out, I ask that you do everything you can to conserve energy. As one of the region's larg-

est employers, it's our responsibility to lead by example. By saving energy, we will be able to make more power available to County residents and businesses, and save taxpayer dollars being spent on electricity bills.

Many of you already are conserving, and I thank you for that. Now, to even further reduce energy consumption here at the County, the Board of Supervisors last month approved a whole litany of measures that our Chief Administrative Officer will be working on.

Among them: shutting off electric decorative lighting and water fountains during Stage III emergencies; installing "occupancy sensors" so that lights automatically turn off when no one is in the room; and encouraging all of you with computers to activate the automatic "power down" mode after five minutes of non-operation.

Simple measures like these should go a long way towards helping us save energy. As always, thanks for everything you do!

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Healthy Families Bring Home the "Hammer"

Two Health and Human Services Agency programs earned national recognition at the Golden Hammer Award Ceremony, sponsored by then-Vice President Al Gore in January. The award highlights exemplary public/private team efforts that contribute to improving the way government works. San Diego Kids Health Assurance Network and Children Youth and Families Health Promotion were recognized for a program that coordinated and trained tax preparers to become Healthy Families Certified Application Assistants. This allowed tax preparers who encountered a family eligible for Healthy Families the ability to enroll children in this subsidized program.

Adoring Adobe

Thumb through the latest edition of *San Diego Home Garden & Lifestyles* the next time you're in the supermarket checkout line. Featured in a "then and now" piece in the March issue is the County's own Rancho Guajome Adobe. A popular spot for weddings, this state and national landmark is a restored rancho built in 1853.

From House to Home

For more than 25 years the Potrero branch library has lived in a leased 912-square-foot house. On Saturday, March 10, the community will celebrate the grand opening of its new, 2,500-square-foot home with a ribbon-cutting by Supervisor Dianne Jacob. The building is on land leased by the County at no charge from the Mountain Empire School District.

Keepsakes Brighten Many Lives

County residents tying the knot at the Assessor/Recorder/Clerk's office have helped brighten the lives of abused and neglected children. Assessor/Recorder/Clerk Greg Smith presented \$5,000 to the Polinsky Center for Children's endowment fund at a recent Board meeting. The money came from the sale of Polaroid photos to newly married couples. Money donated to the fund is used for special activities and events for the children at Polinsky, as well as to cover special needs for kids such as eyeglasses.

Ver•ba•tim

Letters from satisfied customers served by County employees.

Therese Riis and **Debra Rubidoux** (HHSA) were praised for doing a "superb job" during an annual state review of STD records.

"It is always a pleasure to visit County health departments who engender this kind of attitude in their employees."

Jean Creek (Agriculture, Weights & Measures) received thanks for helping a student on a science project.

"I really appreciate you taking time out of your job to help me."

Registrar of Voters received a belated "thank you" from a voter for this office's excellent services provided during the Nov. election.

"Our voter information pamphlet was clear, the ballot was simple to use and not confusing, and the entire voting process was smooth and uncomplicated."

Roy Pickering (Public Works) was praised for a job well done on filling a request for customized maps.

"Roy provided me with excellent customer services, in addition to doing great work!"

Rosanna Paez (HHSA) was singled out for being a very bright spot in an otherwise bleak set of circumstances for one client needing assistance.

"[Paez] went far beyond 'just doing' her job to extending personal kindness to me and my case."

Jim Robertson (Planning & Land Use) was recognized by staff at the Lemon Grove Sheriff's Station for being knowledgeable, approachable and very easy to work with.

"I truly appreciate Jim Robertson's efforts and hard work."

Marty Eslambolchi (Public Works) received words of appreciation from a business CEO who said he's a rarity among the more than 25 counties his company deals with.

"He has always been positive and responsible in all my dealings with him these past 10 years. It's great to have people to work with who approach every situation with a can-do attitude."

Employee Digs for Roots; Finds Family Tree

Everyone knows St. Patrick's Day is March 17 and Cinco de Mayo is May 5. But what about Tartan Day? Two years ago, Congress set aside April 6 to honor the contributions of the Scottish American community in the United States.

While this little known day of recognition hasn't caught on with the greeting card companies, it certainly hasn't escaped the notice of Public Works employee Rand Allan.

Allan serves as deputy commissioner of the Clan Grant Society, Southern California division. It's the clan of his Scottish ancestors, a connection he made with his past after years of digging.

Family reunions and his grandmother's stories about their ancestors helped pique his interest in where he came from. Using the Internet, a genealogy software program and a lot of tenacity, his family tree now encompasses about 4,000 ancestors stretching back to the 1600s. While exploring his Scottish roots, he learned about the clan system and took on the challenge of identifying his family's clan.

"You have to know where you came from to know who you belong to," explained



Using his home computer, Rand Allan was able to explore his ancestry and link to his heritage.

Allan. "Each clan is unique to a specific region. They're like little tribes."

Now that he knows his heritage, he's on a mission to identify other local families in his clan as well. Combing through local phone directories, Allan's counted nearly 300 listings with last names commonly associated with Clan Grant.

"One of the things that the clan has brought about that is good is the sense of belonging, the sense of family, community," said Allan. "That was very strong several hundred years ago. And in a modified form I'm trying to bring that sense of belonging, that sense of community back to at least the Clan Grant group."

He encourages anyone interested in learning more to visit the group's web site at clangrant-ca.org or e-mail him at rballan@clangrant-ca.org.

NewsMakers NewsMakers

District Attorney Paul Pfingst was selected by the San Diego Press Club as one of its "Headliners" for 2000. His office had the distinction of being the first in the nation to implement a review of old cases using DNA technology. The DNA Project has received national media attention and law enforcement leaders around the nation have applauded it as innovative and visionary.

Kim Frink, Housing & Community Development, was selected to serve on a three-person accreditation team that will complete a site visit to Cal State Los Angeles to review its Master in Public Administration program. MPA programs are accredited once every five years by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.

Trio Tackles Triathlon



Lara Hanson, Cindy McCabe and Samantha Sperry are less than a month away from participating in their first triathlon.

Inspired by the story of Scott Delgadillo, the 14-year-old San Diegan with leukemia who made headlines during his search for a bone marrow donor, three County employees are about to embark on a journey of a lifetime.

Lara Hanson, Cindy McCabe and Samantha Sperry are down to their final weeks of training for the "Lava Man" triathlon in Hawaii. On April 8 the Health and Human Services Agency employees participate in the grueling endurance test as part of the Leukemia Society's "team in training" program.

"We're definitely getting in shape and making a lot of friends," said Sperry, who works in Independent Living Skills. McCabe and Hanson both work in Adoptions. Together, they started the six-days-a-week training schedule in November and have committed to raise \$12,900.

Their inspiration, Scott, passed away in January. He was mourned both in San Diego and at the University of Notre Dame, where he made an emotional visit during his illness. This makes their journey all the more special, as his memory will continue to motivate them through the intense physical competition.

For more information about the group's "team in training" venture, or to find out how you can support their effort, call Cindy McCabe at (858) 694-5763.

County News is published for the 17,000 employees of the County of San Diego.

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